

VZCZCXRO5798
PP RUEHDU RUEHMR RUEHPA RUEHRN RUEHTRO
DE RUEHUJA #2118/01 3011703
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 271703Z OCT 08
FM AMEMBASSY ABUJA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4282
INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE
RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA 0069
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 1449
RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS 0142
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 002118

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/W, AF/SPG, INR/AA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/31/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [SU](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA'S FORCE CONTRIBUTIONS TO UNAMID AND AMISOM

REF: SECSTATE 109716

Classified By: Political Counselor Walter Pflaumer for reasons 1.4. (b & d).

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: In an October 21 meeting with DATT and Poloff, Defense Headquarters Director of Peacekeeping Operations Major General F.N. Osokogu confirmed that the GON will meet its stated commitments to deploy troops to UNAMID and AMISOM. He shared a number of details about the status of the deployments that highlighted the challenges Nigerian troops face both in deploying and on the ground. General Osokogu intends to visit his UNAMID battalions on October 26, and has promised later to share his impressions with us on the state of the troops. Although it was clear at times that Osokogu was not fully informed, Post believes his statements offer valuable insights to Nigeria's troop deployment problems to both locations. END SUMMARY.

UNAMID

12. (SBU) On October 21, Major General Osokogu met with DATT and Poloff to respond to reftel questions about UNAMID and AMISOM deployments. He affirmed that the Nigerian Armed Forces (NAF) will meet their stated commitments, and already upgraded the battalion size for UNAMID from 680 to 800 troops. Regarding self-deployment to Darfur, Osokogu said that the GON petitioned the UN for permission to do this, but he expected the request to be denied. He expressed frustration at the UN's insistence that out of Nigeria's fourteen international airports, only Abuja and Lagos were approved for use by UN aircraft. He expressed a strong preference for the Maiduguri airport to be used, avoiding long overland trips for most deploying troops. (Note: Osokogu's concerns may not be just over lost time and petrol. Forty-six soldiers returning home from Darfur were killed in May in an accident with a fuel truck on the Bauchi-Maiduguri highway. End note.) Osokogu further complained about the infrequency of UN flights, noting that he had troops sitting at Abuja's airport since October 18 waiting for an airlift. This problem was compounded by the absence from Abuja of the Bangladeshi UN liaison officer responsible for coordinating Nigerian deployment efforts, who has not yet returned from a UN trip to Darfur.

13. (SBU) Osokogu confirmed that Nigeria's Level II hospital

arrived in Darfur, but logistical problems prevented its deployment to the proposed site. He reported that Nigerian troops in Darfur have 80 new recently delivered Cobra Armored Personnel Carriers (APCs), as well as 26 APCs that Canadian troops left behind (of which he believed only around 30% were functional), thereby reaching the UN standard of 104 vehicles. (Note: Per DAO conversations with Canada's DATT for West Africa, due to cancellation of their local maintenance contract and the generally poor condition of those vehicles, Canada will withdraw their APCs currently on loan to UNAMID by the end of 2008. End note.) Osokogu said he will travel to Darfur on October 26 for an inspection of his troops, and will discuss with us his findings.

AMISOM

¶4. (SBU) Osokogu confirmed that the Somalia-bound units were "identified, trained, and have been on stand-by for some time," and that, like UNAMID, their battalion size would be UN-regulation 800. The main hold-up to their deployment was the procurement of some final equipment by the MOD. In light of the heavy urban fighting experienced by Ugandan troops in Mogadishu, he also acknowledged the need for armor, mentioning that light tanks, possibly Scorpions already in the NAF inventory, would be sent at the soonest opportunity.

¶5. (C) COMMENT: Osokogu was very open and informative, but he did not always seem to have entirely accurate information. For example, he seemed unaware that AMISOM is an African

ABUJA 00002118 002 OF 002

Union-sponsored mission, did not know about a recent scouting mission to Mogadishu performed by Defense Headquarters Staff, and was unaware that the 26 Canadian APCs are almost certainly going to be withdrawn. That said, Post believes his comments on the logistical obstacles faced by deploying Nigerian battalions are accurate and provide an important insight into the factors behind Nigeria's delays. Post will follow up with Osokogu upon his return to Abuja and will report any substantive information septel. END COMMENT.

¶6. (U) This cable coordinated with Consulate Lagos.
Sanders